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[Home](#) / [News & Events](#) / [2004 Releases](#)

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July 29, 2004

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Cornell's Heritage Raspberry Receives 2004 Outstanding Fruit Cultivar Award

By N. Abbott

GENEVA, NY: Heritage, a variety of red raspberry released by Cornell University 35 years ago, was awarded a 2004 Outstanding Fruit Cultivar Award by the American Society of Horticultural Sciences (ASHS), at their annual convention in Austin, TX, July 18. Heritage was released by Donald Ourecky and George Slate at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, NY, in 1969, and has become the world's predominant primocane fruiting cultivar.

"Heritage is one of the most widely grown raspberry cultivars in the world," said Courtney Weber, assistant professor of horticultural sciences, and director of the small fruits breeding program at Cornell. "Heritage was the first raspberry bred to ripen in the fall with quality and firmness good enough for shipping and wholesale markets and sufficient yields to be commercially viable. Because of these characteristics, Heritage has extended the season for consumers and raspberry growers, and paved the way for the year-round fresh raspberry market."

Heritage is resistant or tolerant to most, if not all, major raspberry diseases, and has been used as a parent in the breeding of at least five other commercial cultivars. "Heritage is the standard by which raspberry breeders judge all fall bearing varieties," noted Weber.

The Outstanding Cultivar Awards recognizes fruit introductions that have had a significant impact on the fruit industry within the last 35 years. The awards are determined by the ASHS Fruit Breeding Working Group, who granted them to the Crimson Seedless grape, the Tulameen red raspberry, the Duke blueberry, and the Heritage red raspberry in 2004.

Fruit breeding has been a major focus of the Geneva Experiment Station since it was founded in 1880. Over the last 124 years, researchers at Geneva have introduced more than 245 varieties of apples, grapes, berries, and stone fruits, selecting for yield, flavor, winter hardiness, insect and disease resistance, and vigor. Breeders in Cornell's small fruit program have released 40 strawberries, 39 raspberries, 3 blackberries, 1 elderberry and 1 gooseberry. Heritage is one of the most successful introductions.

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Pictures are linked to hi-res scans



Heritage Raspberry

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Last Modified: July 30, 2004
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